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cont.

of said feedstock due to fouling of said top layer of said fixed bed of catalytic material, the method comprising: [the sequential steps of] (a) introducing said feedstock into said fixed bed of catalytic material, wherein a majority of said feedstock will flow through said top layer of said fixed bed of catalytic material and (b) as said top layer of said fixed bed of catalytic material fouls, bypassing an increasing amount of said feedstock to said bottom layer of said fixed bed of catalytic material.

Please add the following new claims:

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12. (New) A method for extending the operating life of a fixed bed reactor, the method comprising:

providing a reactor comprising a fixed bed;

partitioning said fixed bed into a top layer and a bottom layer;

introducing a feedstock into the fixed bed and as said top layer fouls bypassing an increasing amount of said feedstock to said bottom layer.

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13. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said bypassing step includes positioning a bypass device in the fixed bed, said bypass device comprising:

a cage positioned within said fixed bed, said cage having a plurality of perforations; and

a bypass tube in fluid communication with said cage, said bypass tube protruding from said cage above said fixed bed for bypassing an increasing amount of said feedstock around said top layer of said fixed bed as it fouls through said bypass tube into said cage and out from said cage through said perforations into said bottom layer of said fixed bed.